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ABSTRACT

The author presents contemporary views of the quest for knowledge about human beings and the human experience. She then presents criticism of the natural science model as a basis for social and behavioral science research. She notes that the human being and his behavior are so complex that unidimensional research models are inadequate. However, she finds balance in the contribution of scientific rigor to careful investigation of human phenomena. The author next discusses the inclusion of new procedural options and vistas in research. Two areas of particular interest to her are the involvement of subjects as co-designers and co-experimenters in investigations and the inclusion of religious beliefs as a subject of research. She notes the difficulties of work in this area, including the lack of theory and reliable methods. She concludes with a description of a peer counseling program for school truants which she is in the process of developing. The emphasis is on changing the school environment, and the experiment will involve the peer counselors as co-designers and participant observers. (DOW)

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IN SEARCH OF THE ILLUSIVE VIEW OF MAN

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IN SEARCH OF THE ILLUSIVE VIEW OF MAN

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AERA Division E: State of the Art Address, March 28, 1978

In searching our past and present for this State of the Art address, I found I was tracing in fact, a type of universal quest of an understanding of man; a search for the bits and pieces which might explain the human experience and define the enduring qualities, characteristics and behaviors of the complex organism called mankind. Several "discoveries" led me to choose this search as the basis for my remarks, which seek to identify where I think we now are in counseling and human development; what we have found that works, and where we should or might go in the future. The search also provided a context for examining areas relevant to both branches of our Division despite the actual or assumed differences in our goals and biases.

My first "discovery" was Bronfenbrenner's (1977) evaluation of contemporary developmental psychology: "It is a science of the strange behavior of children in strange situations with strange adults for the briefest possible periods of time (p. 513).

Another was Cronbach's (1975) comments on the futility of attempting to erect theoretical towers. He feels:

> "The special task of the social scientist in each generation is to [illegible] the contemporary facts. Beyond that, he shares with the humanistic scholar and the artist in the effort to gain insights into contemporary relationships, and to realign the culture's view of man with present realities. To know man as he is is no mean aspiration." (p. 126. italics added)

Hints of the past and of the future are contained in both these comments. They touch on the partial faults of the past and the limiting, but possible aspirations of the future.

From quite a different source, I found a passage that helped me to summarize what we in our Division are about; what we have been doing; some of the errors we have made; some problems we have created; as well a as some future directions. It is an excerpt from a paper Luther Cressman sent to his first wife, Margaret Mead, included in her autobiography (Mead, 1972). I quote portions of it here:

> "I would like to see us build a NEW room in that vast and rambling house called 'science.' This room, ...would have over the entrance the words, THOUGHT, REFLECTION, CONTEMPLATION. It would have no tables with instruments, no whirring machinery.... It would be a Commons Room to which men would drift in from those rooms marked Geology, Anthropology,... technology, biology...logic, mathematics, psychology,... and many others.... All these would drop in and linger. This room would have great windows; the vistas our studies have opened. Men, singly or together, would from time to time walk to those windows, to gaze out on the landscape beyond. This landscape... cannot be seen fully by any one of the occupants of the room. Indeed, it cannot be known fully by a whole generation of men. Explorers of each generation travel into its unkown recesses and, with luck, return to share their discoveries with us. So the life of the NEW room would go on... thought, reflection, contemplation... as the explorers bring back their discoveries.... This landscape that we gaze on and try to understand is an epic portion of the human experience." (p. 290)

This is an idyllic picture, describing an ideal and a vision; a model to be used in charting <u>our</u> goals and options. However, I am going to modify this description to highlight the issues on which we have been criticized, which may need attention. Most of these are familiar themes. By distorting the NEW room metaphor, I can cover quickly many of them.

THE DEFICITS AND LIMITATIONS

The NEW room would be labeled COUNSELING AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. Few men and women from other fields of science wander in or out, and when they do, few in the room listen to what their explorations

have revealed. So the counselors (or practioners) and develcpmental scientists occupying the room never leave the room to explore the outer regions of the unknown. Those who have often point accusing fingers at the practioners for their failure to go beyond to explore. For the most part, the practioners are huddled together at one side of the room; the psychologists of scientific ber', in another group across the room. Seldom do either go back and forth to share or learn from one another.

Rather than a Commons Room, the room appears somewhat like a laboratory and sometimes like an office. Instead of a room without instruments and whirrying machinery, it is full of laboratory equipment used for conducting controlled experiments. Much of the noise is coming from the computers spitting out elaborate statistical data and sophisticated printouts. The tables are stacked with piles of correlational-descriptive reports, surveys and questionnaires. A few who sit at tables, are so involved in writing reports they fail to look up or gaze at the landscape revealed beyond the windows.

Instead of quiet, soft conversation, frequent groups or pairs, holding copies of their data, shout at the others over theoretical explanations of the data. Drawing closer to those in angry arguments, one can see that some hold in their hands almost identical data to use in support of their opposing views. For the most part, the practioners have turned their backs on such debates, avoiding the information coming from the computers, or the vast pile of journals spread throughout the room.

Rather, they gaze out the window at the "real world," looking with lenses that focus on only the terrible parts of the landscape... the problems and pathologies of individuals and groups. The developmental psychologists, who approach the window, wear research lenses. Through these they see behaviors, functions, reactions and responses, separate and discrete parts of people. Some see only nondescript humans, stripped of variations by the

averaging and means resulting from their group designs and studies. Some images on the landscape are very faint and vague. These are the topics ignored as unimportant, or infrequently studied.

A few people enter the room wearing bifocal lenses which allow the vision of the real world of the practioner and the investigative world of the researcher. Looking out the window they appear puzzled and ask: Where are the whole persons, with souls and spirits? How are these pieces related to one another? What have you done with all the fruitful data you have ignored? Why are not more of those out there invited to assist you with your work? Why aren't those of you who know the science of research working with you who know the real world relevance, creating a psychological science which could reveal a clearer, more meaningful vista of mankind?

The metaphor is overdrawn, somewhat sarcastic and simplistic. It does, however, capture an intended summation of collective evaluations of the state of our art, if I read the literature and critiques somewhat accurately. The points are obvious. Therefore, I don't intend to dwell further on most of these deficits or limitations. I do wish to discuss briefly three areas, however, in a more explicit and straight-forward manner. I feel these are ones affecting our future most directly. These are the following: 1) our experimental model, 2) our methodologies, and 3) our research content.

Our Model - The Natural Sciences

On the day of his death, Socrates criticized the natural philosophers for trying to use the same explanations for human as for natural phenomena (Bass, 1974). Yet, according to Cronbach (1975), the aim of social and behavioral science, since Comte, has been to establish lawful relations comparable to those of the traditional natural sciences. The laments over our excessive dependency on this model are numerous (Bronfenbrenner, 1977;

Bass, 1974; Goldman, 1976, 1977; Cronbach, 1975).

Those who are critical point out the demanding exactness it requires which does not allow for accomodating intangible, uncontrolled variables of human existence. They point to the changing, rather than stable object of our studies, the human being. Human phenomena is not comparable to natural phenomena. Therefore, the natural science model is inadequate to illuminate much pertinent information we need. "Human environments are so complex in their basic organization that they are not likely to be captured, let alone comprehended through simplistic, unidimensional research models that make no provision for ecological structure and variation." (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p 516)

Rogers (1973) has called us an "unsure" science and labels what we have been doing as a "pseudoscience." Krumboltz (1967) accounts for our continued dependency on this model as a professional inferiority which drives us to imitate the practice and procedures of the prestigious sciences.

Associated with this debate over the appropriateness of the model is the matter of the amount of research that has been devoted to defending theoretical positions. Good scientific theory is needed to advance our knowledge of man. But as Kuhn (1970) has stated, it is hard to make nature fit a paradigm or theory. "That is why the puzzles of human behavior are so challenging and also why measurements undertaken without a theory so seldom lead to any conclusions at all." (p. 135)

However, Gardner (1965) reminds us that "mind-forged" manacles bind many a gifted scholar (smothering) his creative talent...by a growing commitment to his own previously stated doctrine (p. 52).

Based on the past use of this model, however, scientific rigor, including research design and data analysis has been established and now can be applied

to careful investigations outside the laboratory. This rigor can assist in studying the mysterious or intangible areas of human development and behavior. Without it our research in natural environments will continue, for the most part, to be inadequate and inaccurate sources of knowledge.

Standardized Procedures - Our Trusty Hammers

Even if we design our research on different models we still will be lacking pertinent information if we fail to expand our repetoire of methods for collecting that information. The trusty hammers of standardized procedures, fixed-condition and comparative group designs are no longer sufficient and perhaps inadequate (Thoresen and Anton, 1974; Thoresen, 1978; Wilson, 1977; Frey, 1978). Reliable methods are necessary as a foundation of sound and objective science, "yet the very virture of reliable processes can victimize the work of scientists." (Thoresen, 1978, p. 280) In a way we have become "prisoners of our own procedures." (Gardner, 1965, p. 47) We engage in the drunkard's search. We hunt for our keys under the lamp post, because it is lighter there, not because we have any more reason to believe we lost the keys near the lamp post rather than elsewhere in the dark (Kaplan, 1964).

Many agree we need new procedural options. The January, 1978, issue of the Personnel and Guidance Journal, for example, was devoted to the Single Casemethodology of research. The February, 1978, Educational Researcher carried Stake's article on the Case Study method. The intensive design or N-1 experiment is a fine example of an innovative, sound research method. Frey (1978) holds that the pendulum is swinging toward a more holistic position, which accounts for a revived interest in the case study and psychohistory procedures for collecting and analyzing data.

A more decisive break with tradition is the move toward involving subjects as co-designers of and co-experimenters in investigations, particularly in

natural settings. Systematic observation is being introduced more widely, serving different functions. Wilson (1977) conceives of participant-observers as the method to open the door to naturalistic-ecological settings and to the subjective world of peoples' thoughts, feelings and actions. He also sees it as a means for controlling experimenter interactions frequently influencing outcomes. Lofland (1971) employs systematic observation in his study of climates of groups and organization, permitting qualitative analysis as opposed to quantitative analysis. He collects "materials" as opposed to "data" which seems less sterile, more qualitative and human.

Mahoney and Thoresen's (1974) self-control therapy incorporates a systematic, participant observation procedure. The client is led to establish behavior change goals; do an assessment of the maintaining behavior factors; assists in designing the intervention; applies the intervention in consultation with the therapist; monitors the outcomes; and modifies the intervention based on progress results. This process could be adapted for group intervention, which I plan to discuss later.

The Content - Contemporary Issues

In a recent APA survey a trend was noted in the content of the current research activities in developmental psychology. These center around social personality topics such as peer relations, development of sex difference, aging, family relations, interpersonal adjustments and social ecology (Lee, 1978).

Rogers, in his 1973 APA Presidential address (Rogers, 1973), asked whether we dare to be designers; to focus on constructing the new, not repairing the old; "designing a society in which problems will be less frequent, rather than putting poultices on those who have been crippled by social factors."

(p. 381) He admits this would be risky...taking us out of our offices and classrooms.

This seems to be part of the potential of social ecological research. Psychologists are urged and are taking the role of agents of social change in conducting such research. As Bandura (1974) has stated, psychology cannot tell people how they ought to live their lives, but it can provide them with the means for effecting personal and social change. We can use our findings in the service of human betterment (p. 869).

THE SEARCH WE IGNORE

This brings me to one of the two personal reflections as we look at the future. The first deals with a subject we have severely neglected in our research, significantly related to counseling and human development. The other is a type of research which could combine the goals of both our groups.

As others have done, the few who have written or spoken on the subject of religion and its place in the puzzle of human nature, I began apologetically and hesitantly. After long periods of debate, wrestling with the real issues, examining my own beliefs, intentions and biases, at times rejecting the idea of introducing the topic, I came to this position.

Carl Rogers tells of a prominent physicist who came to him to consult about changing his profession to the field of psychology. The major question he wished answered was the area of "greatest mystery" in psychology. Rogers responded with the mystery of the other "realities" beyond the realm of physical reality (Rogers, 1973). The topic, he admitted was dreadfully threatening to psychologists. The intellect stammers when it tackles true mysteries (Allport, 1967). Allport speaks of THE Mystery in his psychology of religion as the

ultimate, irreducible ground of the theoretical, scientific and value-creating process.

I am a practicing Christian. I am quite aware of the part my belief has played in shaping my development, many of my behaviors, thoughts and motivations...and my value biases. This undoubtedly has heightened my professional interest in this subject. However, it seems a paradox to me that in all our intense concentration on learning how to assist people and searching for the causes and conditions of human development, we have almost totally ignored or reputiated religious beliefs as an area for scientific investigations. I would like to make a case for it's receiving higher priority in the future.

Reasons for Neglect

1. Theoretical Biases. Since the time of Freud, therapists have had the tendency to perceive spiritual faith as a manifestation of infantile and neurotic urges. Traditional psychology has either ignored personal faith or treated it as if it were some variant of the bizarre thinking of emotionally immature or deviant persons. No cognitive theorist, aside from a small attempt by Rokeach (1960), has seen fit to explore the domain of religious beliefs (Spilka, 1971). An interesting dichotomy has been pointed out by Campbell (1975):

> "Note than when an evolutionary biologist encounters some ludicrous and puzzling form of animal life he approaches it with a kind of awe, certain that behind the bizarre form lies a functional wisdom that he has yet to understand....I believe ...that psychologists and other social scientists, when considering an apparently bizarre, incomprehensible feature of their own social tradition, or that of another culture, should approach it with awe, expecting that when eventually understood, when our theories have caught up with it, that seemingly bizarre superstition will turn out to make an adaptive sense. I find such an attitude totally missing in psychology or psychiatry today. Instead our fields are apt to invoke tradition and religious heritage only to explain malfunctions, be it neurotic individual

guilt or collective social prejudice." (p. 1105, italics added)

Most attention given to religious beliefs has been a mention, afterthought, or corollary of other investigations such as genetic evolution, moral development, values and attitudes. However, a faint but recent interest has been shown in religious idealogy in connection with motivational theory (December, 1974). Interestingly enough, little mention is made of religious belief in any of the articles on pro-social behavior and alturism reported in the 1972 issue of the Journal of Social Issues, devoted to this subject.

2. Lack of Theories and Reliable Methods. The major difficulty in work in this area has been the criterion problem. We simply do not know, nor have we defined, what constitutes religious beliefs which are very useful in designing research. Dimensions have been identified with some degree of reliability, labeled, "intrinsic and extrinsic." Usual criteria have been expressed beliefs and religious practices.

Nor has any real theory of religious belief been explored or developed. A few weak theories relating personality and religion have been constructed, but these have not generated significant knowledge (Spilka, 1971). Campbell (1975) contends that the areas of disagreement such as how people should live their lives, child rearing, sex, duty, guilt, sin, self-indulgence, etc., makes it impossible to experiment or to put well-developed theories to rigorous tests. "On these issues, psychology and psychiatry cannot yet claim to be truly scientific and thus have special reasons for modesty and caution in undermining traditional belief systems." (p. 1103)

The Factor-analytic procedures have been the most popular for determining possible dimensions of religious beliefs. Recently some have begun to use projective measures to uncover some of the more subtle aspects of religious thinking (Spilka, 1971). The inadequacies of our scientific tools to examine

this aspect of man attests to our neglect. Most of the material reported in the massive, comprehensive handbook, Research on Religious Development (1971) indicates frustration, inconclusive data and "need for more research."

A Brief for Future Research

A lead article in an APA Monitor over a year ago discussed the effects that had been made to de-program youth converted to Dr. Moon's "religion." The difficulties, and few successes encountered, even using proven interventions, were sobering. The concluding comments reflected on the lack of psychological knowledge on religious idealogy determining human behavior. It was suggested that the field of psychology may have erred in concentrating too heavily on the collection of "hard" data at the expense of "soft" data such as religious beliefs.

Personal observation has led me to realize that commitment of something beyond oneself, be it a political, religious, or emotional belief (love) has a powerful influence on human behavior. Such loyalties often seem to supersede rationality, and tend to invalidate some of our scientific theories about mankind.

The adolescent period of development seems to be a particularly vulnerable time for shaping behavior patterns and life styles. Yet, when Havighurst and Keating (1971) combed the material published over four decades to write their chapter on the religion of youth, they found little solid research where religion is included as a variable.

As a result, Strommen (1974) conducted a survey of 7,050 high school church-related youth to assess attitudes, feelings and behaviors associated with religious beliefs. His results were published in the book, Five Cries of Youth. Strommen was able to identify five distinct clusters in the data. He labeled these as the cries: of loneliness or low self-esteem; family trouble, or the psychological orphan; social protest; prejudice; and the joyous. Different variables were examined in terms of their relationship to these cries, or

conditions of youth. One relationship seemed clearly confirmed: those adolescents who have direct personal experience of the presence of God differ from those who do not in their outlook on life, relations with people, motivations and sense of moral responsibility.

Whether one is neutral, skeptical, indifferent or hostile to such claims, belief systems are one of the facets of human development. Such study is needed, not to support a bias, but to know the more accurate role religion plays in the economy of human existence. Especially in the area of the psychology of religion, psychologists may be likened to fishermen throwing their lines into an unexplored lake. What fish they catch depends upon the nature of the hook and of the bait used. It seems clear we have not developed a variety of hooks and bait. We may not even be aware or interested in our limitations as fishermen (Bertocci, 1974, p. 38).

TRANSFORMING EXPERIMENTS

Developmental and counseling researchers have been challenged to be designers of future-oriented, preventive approaches for the welfare of society. This is possible if we take seriously Dearborn's advice to Bronfenbrenner: "If you want to understand something, try to change it." (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 517) Applied to research, Bronfenbrenner has added a very human label, calling such research, "transforming." By this term, he means "an experiment that radically restructures the environment, producing a new configuration that activates previously unrealized behavioral potentials of the subject." (p. 528) Such research potentially combines the differing goals and activities of counseling and human development in collaborative efforts.

I propose to expand this definition of transforming experiments to include a focus on changing peoples' lives, as well as their environments. Obviously, when people change, often their environments change and visa-versa. Such experiments would accomodate many of the issues I have raised in this paper,

correcting for some of our errors and neglects. They also would assist us in our search to know man as he now is. Specifically, the following conditions are possible:

1. The design would be focused on assessed problems demanding intervention.
2. Individuals from the target population would be involved in the design.
3. Some of the subjects could assist in conducting the experiment.
4. Similar procedures to those used in intensive designs and self-control processes could be used in the collection of data on individuals and groups.
5. Subjective data would be available, as well as objective, observable data.
6. Study of multiperson systems of interaction, taking into account aspects of the environment, beyond the immediate setting could be made.

A "rough draft" description of a potential experiment may help to make this more clear.

Using Peer Counseling as a Change Agent

For the past nine years I have been involved in developing and implementing a peer counseling program in the Palo Alto schools (Varenhorst, 1976). Students between grades 7-12 voluntarily take an 18 hour training program in addition to regular classes, to prepare them to be helping friends to peers. The counselee target population are those who are socially handicapped in some way and are experiencing loneliness and isolation. Over its history, approximately 1400 students have been trained, and about 50 percent formally accepted a counselee responsibility. The enthusiastic response of students, teachers and parents has meant the program was adopted as a regular school program when outside funding ended. This represents a significant evaluation, but no formal research has been

done, either to evaluate outcomes or to modify the program.

Palo Alto, along with other districts, is experiencing an increasing rate of chronic absenteeism. Causes and solutions have been discussed, but no active intervention has been tried to reverse this trend. One possible hypothesis is that school, as a social system, is a hostile environment. Contemporary adolescents do not have many skills to cope with this environment and this leads to the alternative of avoiding it. It can be compared to a beauty contest which an ugly girl is forced to enter each day, knowing not only that she will fail, but that she will be offended deeply as well.

I am currently designing a "transforming" experiment based on this assessed problem. Although the focus will be on using peer counseling training to change the school environment, it will also be a study to learn more about the absentees. It will be an attempt to change them, ala Dearborn. In collaboration with a very bright high school girl, one of the chronic truants, a research design is being developed. The proposed design includes the following:

1. One group of truants will be given peer counseling traning. The curriculum deals with social skills needed to cope in school environments.
2. Another group of truants will be assigned as counselees to non-truant peer counselors. Some may reject the attention of the peer counselor, as some do in other situations where a peer counselor attempts to establish a relationship. The peer counselor will engage in all the possible ways to help as are available to him or her, including consultation with an adult peer counseling leader.
3. When the truant group completes its peer counseling training, those who are ready will be asked to accept assignments working with other truant students not previously contacted.
4. A group of teachers will be selected to be given the adult leadership training, covering many of the same skills taught to students.

5. A random selection of truants, peer counselors and teachers will be trained as participant-observers. These people will collect information, monitor the progress of the experiment and suggest modifications.
6. Data will be gathered on a regular schedule from selected individuals from each group. These will record the changes of behavior and attitudes, together with the feelings about school and peer groups.
7. Multi-criteria will be used, including attendance behavior, peer group friendships formed, attitudes of students towards school and teachers, and teacher attitudes towards non-conforming students.

At this point the design is very incomplete and general. Much "mess" has to be cleared up. Hopefully, involved in this experiment we will be able to examine such things as: Is peer counseling effective in teaching social skills and if so, how does it affect the behaviors of students who take the training? Is adult peer counseling training effective in changing teacher behavior and attitudes? Does participation in helping to design and participant-observation have an interactive effect on the outcomes? Does peer counseling training have any effect on the dynamics of the homes from which these students come? What other causes or factors might be maintaining the negative behaviors of adolescents? What are other causes or factors maintaining hostile school environments?

The concept of transforming or reform research is not particularly new. Others have engaged in what has been called "social-action" research where the target goal was primarily to "reform" the subjects, not the environment. One such study, reported by Riessman and Popper (1968) used San Quentin offenders. By studing their own behaviors, designing their own rehabilitation, they were rehabilitated. This was sustained over the years.

Devoting time and creative effort to designing such transforming experiments, and conducting them, should be part of the state of our art in the future as well.

CONCLUSION

I am tempted to close with the comment, "More research is needed." It is. But something else is needed also. What is needed is more sharing; less debating. We need to intermingle face-to-face, to think, reflect and contemplate our problems, efforts and solutions. We need to stimulate and inform, mutually. In 1936, a group of young psychologists in the East organized a "Society of Experimenting Psychologists" that was to become known as the Psychological Round Table (Benjamin, 1977). It was designed for younger psychologists to have opportunities for a forum for their research. The founders had felt the frustration of staying home doing research while their academic seniors went off to talk about research. It was not just another professional orgarization, but a gathering of members to discuss and explore their ideas and the implementation of them in research. One of the unwritten rules was that no one was to report on research already published. A list of those early members points to the eventual contributions some of these men have made in the field of psychology.

This model seems to be so appropriate to meet our need. It is possible that the Task Force concept which we plan to initiate at this convention could be a beginning of such a group for our Division. Such informal, but focused sharing could influence our future dramatically.

When Margaret Mead was a graduate student she used to wake up saying to herself, "The last man on Raratonga who knows anything about the past will probably die today. I must hurry." (Mead, 1972, p. 292) I don't sense that urgency among us. I don't sense the urgency that human beings will die or become deformed, psychologically, if we don't hurry and perfect our skills or our science; if we don't work together. We need that urgency now and in the future.

Margaret Mead has sumed it up beautifully: "Knowlege joined to action...knowledge about what man has been and is...can protect the future. There is hope, I believe, in seeing the human adventure (the search for man) as a whole and in the shared trust that knowledge about mankind, sought in reverence for life, can bring life."[1]

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